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Participants Invited to Join Major NASA Competition Hosted by Cal Poly

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Interested in designing a lunar backhoe? The Cal Poly College of Engineering is partnering with Slobotics to enter NASA's Lunar Regolith Excavation Challenge. Students and community members interested in participating in this prestigious national competition are now invited to join a Cal Poly/Slobotics team.

The event will be hosted in the Engineering Plaza at Cal Poly on August 2-3. Twenty Regolith teams from universities, the private sector and industry have already registered for the competition. Winning teams will split \$750,000 in prize money and have the chance to contribute to NASA's final product: an excavator that will be used to establish a moonbase by 2020.

The challenge requires teams to build an autonomous robot that can excavate 330 pounds of lunar soil, called "regolith," in 30 minutes and transport it to a collector box. Because solar energy on the moon is limited, the robot must be very efficient, operating with an average of less than 150 watts – about one cent worth of household electricity.

The joint Cal Poly/Slobotics team has already started developing its robotic excavator. "I'm excited about the progress we've made," said Fred DePiero, assistant dean of engineering and team advisor. "The lunar environment provides significant challenges, but I'm confident our innovative approach will give us an advantage."

Slobotics, founded by Cal Poly students and alumni, aims to develop practical robotics applications. The group welcomes more expertise for the Regolith team, especially from individuals with an interest in programming, mechanical design, or robotics.

The Lunar Regolith Excavation Challenge is administered by the California Space Education and Workforce Institute and co-hosted by Cal Poly's CENG and the California Space Authority.

For more information about the Cal Poly/Slobotics Regolith Team contact Kyle Wiens at <u>kyle@ifixit.com</u> or Slobotics at <u>http://www.slobotics.com</u>. The official site of the Lunar Regolith Excavation Challenge can be found at <u>http://regolith.csewi.org/about</u>.

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